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NEWS RELEASE

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Leader of Fourth Street Mob Sentenced to 25 Years in Prison

WASHINGTON - James Becton, 34, of Southeast Washington, D.C., the leader of the Fourth Street Mob, was sentenced yesterday to 25 years in prison, U.S. Attorney Jeffrey A. Taylor, Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) Chief Cathy L. Lanier, and Joseph Persichini, Jr., Assistant Director in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) Washington Field Office, announced today.

Becton received the sentence in U.S. District Court before the Honorable James Robertson, who also ordered the defendant to serve 10 years of supervised release upon completion of his prison term. Becton was found guilty by a jury in September 2008 of Conspiracy to Distribute and Possess with Intent to Distribute Cocaine, Cocaine Base, also known as Crack Cocaine, and Marijuana.

At trial, the evidence established that Becton, along with his brother, Willie Best, were the leaders of a drug organization that controlled the 4200 block of Fourth Street, SE. This organization acquired kilogram quantities of cocaine, cooked it into crack cocaine, and then sold the crack cocaine on the streets of the District of Columbia. It had this block "locked down" from the late 1990's until May 2007 when the FBI's Safe Streets Task Force, a combination of the FBI's best agents and MPD's best detectives and officers, executed a series of search warrants and dismantled this criminal enterprise. The evidence also established that Becton and his organization used acts of violence to maintain their grip on this neighborhood and to spread their poison on the streets of Washington, D.C.

The 4th Street Mob prosecution grew out of a long-term FBI/MPD alliance called the Safe Streets Task force that targeted violent drug trafficking gangs in the District of Columbia. The Safe Streets Initiative is funded in part by the Baltimore Washington High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area as well as the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force.

Of the additional 15 defendants charged in this case, 14 pled guilty, and one, Fred Mercer, remains a fugitive.

In announcing the sentence, U.S. Attorney Taylor, MPD Chief Lanier, and FBI Assistant Director in Charge Persichini praised the efforts of FBI Special Agents Mary Counts (retired), Christopher Fiorito, Clifford Swindell, Gerard Wynn and Garrett McKenzie, MPD Detective Oliver Garvey, Sargent Christopher Baxa, Investigators Anthony Guice and Tim Andes, and Prince George's County Detective Sean Chaney. Mr. Taylor also recognized the outstanding support provided by John Russell, Mary Downing, Carolyn Carter-McKinley, Diane Brashears, Kim Hall, Barbara Necastro, Sandra Holland, Nadiyyah Ishman, and former Supervisory Paralegal Tracy Heckler, and Criminal Intelligence Analysts Frank Morgan and Shannon Alexis, all of whom assisted in the successful prosecution of the case. Finally, Mr. Taylor cited the efforts of Assistant U.S. Attorneys Arvind K. Lal and Matthew P. Cohen, who prosecuted the case, and Kenneth F. Whitted, who assisted in the investigation of the case.

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